



WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

8.4 October 2008

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

Our Next meeting will be on **Saturday October the 11th**, at 493 Elgar Rd. when we'll have a back-to-normal workshopping meeting. **November 7th-9th** we'll have our annual Poetry Retreat (see below) and **December 13th** will be our last meeting for the year at Elgar Rd. I suggest we bring something to share for lunch and meet at 1pm. for those who can, or bring something for a festive afternoon tea. It is early but do let us wish you the blessings of the Christmas season.

ROSTER FOR AFTERNOON TEA

October – Sue, Carolyn & Paige

November – Poetry Weekend

December – Maree S. Keith & Sony

POETRY WEEKEND

Friday, November 7th till Sunday 9th will be our Poetry Weekend at Montserrat House, near Pallotti College, Millgrove.

Please register for this, even if you can only come for part of the time. If you have not been on a weekend away with us you don't know what you are missing!

On the Saturday **Catherine Bateson** has agreed to lead a **workshop** from 10.30-12.30pm and has promised to give us some exercises for the afternoon. On the Sunday our *Quiet Day* will be led by Rev. **Robin Pryor**, a retired Uniting church minister, who is well experienced in leading retreats. His theme will be "**Landscapes of farewell, landscapes of welcome**". As in the past, we'll be self-catering for this so the cost will be reasonable. Please fill in the Response slip attached, so we can plan accordingly.

PAST WORDSMITHS GATHERINGS

Both the August and September meetings were well attended. In August **Kathryn Hamann** led us in an entertaining and

informative workshop on metaphor and we had great fun coming up with a communal poem (see Poets Corner.)

In September we split the meeting between a workshop starting at 1.30 and ending at 3.30, and the **launch of *What is a Huggle?*** by Elizabeth Fensham. As she knows both my daughter Bronwyn (the illustrator) and myself, it was a very family sort of occasion, especially as my granddaughter Talia was willing to help me in reading the rhyme. Another daughter, Rachel, told the story of its origins and Bronwyn spoke of her horror of technology, in getting her drawings to computer. It was a special thrill that Coby Hill and Janny Brouwer, made the trip across from Langwarrin for this event.



Elizabeth Fensham, Jean and Bronwyn

In August in book week I spoke to a small group of children at Mountain Districts Christian School about how *What is a Huggle?* came to be written and published.

NATIONAL POETRY WEEK

On the 5th of September we had what is becoming an annual event: a reading for Poetry Week. Held at Box Hill Library it was quite well attended and made a favourable impression on audience and staff of the library. It looks as though they may consider asking us to do regular readings! Thank you to all who participated, especially our star Cameron Semmens and Kathryn and Janette who came in spite of not being well.



Bridh Hancock reading at BoxHill Library

MELBOURNE REFLECTIONS

Janette and I, assisted by some of our Book Committee members, have been very busy sorting through and selecting poems for the book. Our task is almost complete as far as the poetry goes, though there are still some people to be informed and some addresses we cannot track down. Please pray that we can find ways of letting everyone know. Now comes what is probably a harder task: that of selecting artwork to match with the poetry, particularly as we have considerable constraints placed upon us as to where the colour pages can go. We are hoping to have the book out by March/April next year. Again we would value your prayers that this book, though secular in nature, will still be a production that honours God in its quality, artistry and its integrity.

MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL

I have been reading – not nearly enough, and certainly not enough poetry, but one interesting book I have just finished was *Life Class* by Brenda Niall. I bought this at the Writers' Festival when I heard Joan Ackland deliver one of her beautifully crafted speeches in presenting Brenda with the Alice Award from the Society of Women Writers. It was a shame that Rebecca Maxwell, the president was unable to be there as she was in Adelaide caring for her mother.

For anyone who knows and loves Melbourne, Brenda's story of her life growing up in Kew was full of resonances. That same afternoon I went to St Paul's Cathedral to hear a beautiful presentation of the work of Russian poet, Anna Akhmatov. Readers included Robert Dessaix, who read in Russian, and a jewess from New York

who was bemused to find herself up front in an Anglican cathedral. Later I heard a debate on whether poetry can save the world and, being me, put my bit in agreeing with a lecturer from Latrobe, who felt that poetry is currently devalued because of what is being published in places like *The Age* newspaper.

READINGS AT SURREY HILLS

My guest for October is **Phil Ilton**, well known to many of us and a long-time supporter of the Wordsmiths and PCP. So come along to 157 Union Rd, Surrey Hills at **2pm. this Wednesday, October 8th.**

In November my guest is **Ian Hansen**, Emeritus Professor of English at Melbourne. I have been to several seminars he has led and he has a fund of interesting insights, concerning writing and poetry. This is a not to be missed occasion – keep **2pm, Wednesday, November 12th**, marked in your diary.

MEMBER NEWS

At our August meeting, we were delighted when **Cameron Semmens** introduced us to his fiancée Sonya Burggraaf, who popped in at the end of the meeting. That gave us an opportunity to present them with an engagement present from the Wordsmiths. Our good wishes and prayers go with them as they prepare for their wedding in November.



Cathy Altmann has had her Master's essay on cancer & poetry published in Monash uni's on-line journal (by the way, she got 1st class honours for this) and has also had a poem published in Eureka Street. Welcome back to **Marlene Marburg**, who is just back from travelling in Europe.

Congratulations to **Leigh Hay** on joining the ranks of Nannahood with the birth of her first grandchild Emma Jean.

I was glad to be able to get to the recent art exhibition of **Nick Costello**, whose varied collection, largely focused on Ecology was most interesting.

Please pray for our older members who are not well or are unable to come to meetings: **Mary Macdonald, Nel Lewis, Marie-Louise Stephens, Coby Hill and Janny Brouwer** who are now too far away to come often.

Continue to pray for ways to provide funding for Melbourne Reflections. Our application for a grant from the Melbourne City Council was knocked back.

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS?

Why not help support the work of PCP and get some early Christmas presents? Check our range of books and specials – including our latest *What is a Huggle?* children's colouring book –with our response form.

COMPETITIONS

PCP annual poetry competition

It's the time of the year again when we hold our annual poetry competition. This year the theme is **NEW BEGINNINGS**. **1st prize \$400, 2nd \$100 and 25 poems will be chosen to go into next year's anthology.** See the Entry form with this newsletter and get your entries in before **October 31st**.

Melbourne Poets Union International Poetry Competition 2008 - Closing 31st Oct 2008

This year's judge is David McCooey. Unpublished poems max 50 lines. Judge of the U/18 competition is Lorin Ford.

Or go to <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mpuinc/MPU/Home.html>

2009 Eyre Writers Award – closing 24th Nov 08 Tom Black Memorial Prize for non-rhyming poetry up to 50 lines. Eyre Writers Award for rhyming poetry up to 50 lines. \$5 per entry with entry form. Info from Competition Secretary, PO Box 1771, Port Lincoln SA 5606 or eyre_writers@iprimus.com.au

Poets on Poetry – closing 1st Dec 08

Submissions for a book titled Poets on Poetry – to be a selection of 500 word statements about things like what poetry means, how you came to write it, what is the future of poetry etc with one short poem from the poet. No payments envisaged at this stage. rk2000@bigpond.net.au

Poetry Matters – closing 5th Dec 08

Poems unpublished and not under consideration, in 3 categories – poems under 10 lines, poems 10-20 lines and poems 20-40 lines. Open theme. Enter up to 10 for a standard \$10 entry fee. Send to Cheryl Howard, 61 Palmer Cres, Newham, Vic 3442

Notata online journal – closing 19th Dec

St Kilda Music & Poetry Inc. invites submissions of poetry and short stories for the first volume of a new online journal *Notata*, to be launched in March 2009. This journal publishes poetry, short stories, essays, articles and letters from travellers. The dual themes for this issue are 'Displacement, community, future' and 'Outside my front door'. Submission info available at: www.stkmusicpoetry.org.au

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, October 8th Reading at 157 Union Rd, Surrey Hills with **Phil Ilton** as special guest. 2-4pm. (\$5 entry)

Saturday, October 11th Wordsmiths meeting at 493 Elgar Rd, 2-5pm.

Friday, November 7-9th Poetry Weekend at Palotti College, Millgrove.

Wednesday, November 12th Reading at 157 Union Rd, Surrey Hills with **Ian Hansen** as special guest. 2-4pm. (\$5 entry)

Saturday, December 13th Last meeting for the year at 493 Elgar Rd. If you are able to, come at 1pm. for a shared lunch before our meeting at 2'o'clock.

***Have you paid your dues this year?
Please pay them now, using the Response slip.***



POETS' CORNER

Graced Moment

A yellow sunbeam beckoned me
Before day turned to night.
The air was clear and magic,
The sky was bright.
To westward, sheets of golden silk
Shimmered and glowed,
Luminous clouds hung in the sky,
Rippled and flowed.
I turned around, an urge to seek
The eastern sky,
And there, clear arched above the road
A rainbow high.
Both ends were anchored in the earth,
A perfect bow,
A blessing from the sky above
And earth below.
The colours radiated clear
Distinct, yet one.
A double arc crept into view;
The work was done.
Such scenes have happened here
Since time began
An arc with seven rungs –
Part of the plan
To lift our minds to cosmic truth
And draw us home
To love's embrace, the ancient goal -
No more to roam
A cosmic child, summoned to tell
All time and space
Earth speaks of star-dust images
Creator's face.

Mary O'Shannessy f.c.J.

Pure Spirit was something she spurned –
No gift, no sacrifice.
Salvation was there to be earned;
God's "if", pay His price.
Toward the ultimate Spirit he yearned –
No labour, just longing.
Devoutly with the spirit he burned;
for favour belonging.

Keith Wray

When you are happy
or sad
or lonely
I see the look in your eye.
I get the message

When you see a tree
feel the wind
smell a rose
watch a butterfly
Do you get My message?

Joy Chellew

M. S. (Multiple Sclerosis)

I have little snow-flakes
Falling on my brain
They tell me life
Will never ever be the same,
The snow will turn to blizzard
Then an avalanche will come,
With my legs now dead
It's impossible to run
With a body that's now frozen
Arms that cannot dig
Those little snow flakes
Just keep dancing
To a tune I cannot hear.

Ashley Harris

My love is a rose, fragrant as a dewy morn
Many petalled, heart red
Velvet, swaying to my whisper
Open, to reveal without reserve.

Your essence stokes my senses.
Intoxicated, dizzy, I swoon
Surrender to your embrace
Drowning in ambrosia.

Seeking to enfold, I bruise your petals.
Seeking to possess, I grasp your thorns.
Your wounding stems my ardour;
Crushed together we bleed as one

Thorns met, we succumb to dark and night
Though warmed by love and pierced by light.

*(Communal poem by Wordsmiths from Kathryn
Hamann's Workshop)*